

INFORMATION ITEM

Delta Partners: Interagency Ecological Program and Estuary Monitoring Science

Summary: The Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) has been collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing environmental and ecological data from the San Francisco Estuary and within the Delta for more than 40 years. As a major generator of Delta and Estuary compliance data, and a leader in co-production of Estuary science, the IEP can share its experiences from within the Delta monitoring community for Council education and perspective. The IEP Lead Scientist will provide regular updates on IEP activities to the Council, and was last here in January 2018 to introduce data-policy communications issues associated with administering the Program. This briefing will describe how data is collected and where it is used in the management of ecological resources under IEP responsibility.

Background

The IEP collects environmental and ecological data as part of its mandate to document the impacts to resources within the San Francisco Estuary resulting from long-term operations of State and Federal Water Projects.

The IEP consists of six Federal and three State agencies bound by a Memorandum of Understanding, of which the Delta Stewardship Council holds an ex-officio role. The IEP conducts and supports collaborative science that monitors the impacts from the Water Projects. With three levels of organization (including Agency Directors, Program Coordinators, and Science Management Teams) the IEP coordinates a collective Program-wide budget of around \$30 million annually to deploy boats, surveys, and equipment to assist in understanding water resource use and aquatic ecosystem responses to the use. Delta Science Program Staff are represented on the Coordinators and Science Management Team.

Survey data generated by the IEP tracks compliance with Water Rights Decisions and Biological Opinions to inform agency decision-making. IEP data are used to inform the Smelt Working Group and the Delta Operations for Salmon and Sturgeon Teams. These teams make Water Project Operations recommendations in compliance with Endangered Species Act Biological Opinions and Water Rights Decision requirements. Synthesis efforts within the IEP also generate considerable understanding of ecological services provided by the Delta and its tributaries and watersheds (see, for example, the IEP's data used in *The Collapse of Pelagic Fishes in the Upper San Francisco Estuary* (2007), and *An Updated Conceptual Model of Delta Smelt Biology* (2015).

This briefing by IEP Lead Scientist Steve Culberson will discuss several aspects of IEP's monitoring science mandate, including:

- 1. What data do IEP surveys collect?**
- 2. Where does this data go?**
- 3. Is compliance the only use of the information generated?**

Relationship to the Council and Delta Plan

The information produced by the IEP, and its monitoring science, seeks to inform managers on various aspects of the coequal goals: water supply reliability, the Delta ecosystem, and climate impacts on the ecological performance of the Estuary. The Delta Science Program Brown Bag Seminar Series "Data-to-Decision-making" features IEP scientists describing their roles and perspectives on compliance science in the Delta and Estuary and helps inform Council decisionmaking. The IEP spends a good deal of effort producing information informing water resource management practices affecting the Delta and the state, while also focusing on the ecology of the Estuary and Delta as a whole. The collaborative work of the IEP, along with housing the IEP Lead Scientist at the Council, furthers the Council's goal of One Delta, One Science.

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

None.

Contact

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